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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA RECOMMENDATIONS IN RUN-UP TO POTUS VISIT

REF: Ankara 2010

1. As we approach the June 26-29 POTUS visit to Turkey for bilateral meetings in Ankara and the NATO Summit in Istanbul, Turkish press interest in the visit is building. The embassy has received numerous requests from Turkish media outlets to interview USG principals in the run-up to the visit, and we anticipate that similar requests will be made from Turkish media representatives in Washington. This message details embassy recommendations for possible events with the Turkish media to set the stage for the visit and provide context for both the bilateral portion and the summit.

2. Embassy recommends that the President or NSC Advisor Rice hold one interview with Turkish print media and one with electronic media some time in June:

For a print media event, we would suggest a press roundtable with a group of leading editors and columnists, to include:

- Ferai Tinc, diplomatic news editor of "Hurriyet," Turkey's largest circulation daily;
- Mehmet Barlas, columnist in the Turkish daily "Sabah";
- Ekrem Dumanli, editor-in-chief of Islamist-oriented "Zaman";
- Oral Calislar, columnist in left-leaning "Cumhuriyet."

All suggested participants are English speakers, and we believe they would be willing to travel to Washington for the roundtable.

For the television, the embassy recommends a one-on-one interview. Preferred options would be:

- TRT, Turkey's state broadcaster, with an interviewer to be vetted by the embassy (note: we understand from Prime Minister Erdogan's staff that in his January White House meeting, Erdogan suggested, and the President reportedly agreed, that Ugur Dundar, a veteran anchorman who frequently does contract work for TRT, would be a good choice);
- NTV, Turkey's leading all-news channel, with the station's Ankara representative, Murat Akgun.

The interview would take place in Washington. Both Dundar and Akgun are English speakers.

3. In addition, the embassy recommends that Secretary Powell appear on Turkish television in early June. We recommend a series of two or three interviews to reach the broadest possible audience. Recommended options include:

- TRT or NTV as recommended above;
- Nuray Basaran and Faruk Demir, SHOW-TV, one of Turkey's popular channels (embassy is already on record supporting this request - see refel). Note: Basaran and Demir do not speak English. They are requesting a late April time-frame for this interview. However, it could be held for June as a scenesetter for the visit.
- Kanal-D, another popular channel, with the station's news director, Metehan Demir. Demir's interview would also appear in Turkey's largest circulation daily "Hurriyet," which is owned by the same media group;
- CNN-Turk, an all-news channel, with interviewer Mehmet Ali Birand. (Note: Birand has proposed a joint interview with Alexis Papahelas of Greece's MEGA-TV. We defer to Athens for its assessment of Papahelas and MEGA-TV.)

